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DEPT FOR IO/T (G.ROBERTS), GENEVA FOR WMO DELEGATION

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [TPHY](#) [IT](#) [WMO](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY RESPONSE: PREPARING FOR WMO QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS

REF: STATE 047359

¶1. SUMMARY: Embassy presented reftel non-paper setting out U.S. views on the upcoming World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Congress to the MFA Office Director for UN Technical Organizations, Stefano Nicoletti, and to General Massimo Capaldo, Chief of the Air Force's Meteorological Service. The GOI's response was received directly from the Meteorological Service in English, which we have edited for clarity. Italy shares the main thrust of the U.S. position and recognizes that all the issues addressed are of paramount relevance for discussion during the WMO Congress. According to the MFA, its office is in almost daily contact with the Meteorological Service. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN TEXT of the GOI Response to Reftel Demarche:

GETTING BACK TO BASICS

¶2. Italy believes that WWW (acronym not defined) Programs are still at the forefront of the success of the (World Meteorological) Organization. We would like this to be complemented by major coordination for severe weather warnings and, in the near future, by efforts on predictability and modeling over a longer time scale, in order to be better prepared as a Member to tackle issues such as disaster prevention and mitigation. In this respect, we also believe that the WMO still has to find a way to improve the management of crosscutting programs that are showing some deficiencies in terms of effective results.

CONVENTION CHANGES

¶3. We would like a proper balance between activities of the organization and the correct representation of its objectives in the Convention. We see some deficiencies in the formulation of the current Convention. This is probably due to the fact that when it was originally written, cooperation among Members was a target in itself. Currently we would like for the Convention better to mirror the various activities implemented by the WMO over the years. Therefore, we are not as a matter of principle opposing changes to the Convention, but we believe that very careful consideration ought to avoid increasing the WMO's commitments beyond their current sustainable level, and that changes should be implemented not by simple majority, but by a consensus of all the major contributors to the Organization.

WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE 2009

¶4. Italy in the past has profited very little from global meetings in the environment area. In addition, in a few cases at the national level, the real conclusions of these meetings were represented incorrectly to decision makers and to the media. However, if other Members, mainly in developing countries, feel

strongly about it and, provide a better focus for the ultimate aim of the Conference, we are open to discussion.

BUDGET

¶5. Italy does not believe that the WMO has a budget problem, or at least, given current initiatives, Italy believes that a nominal zero growth budget should ultimately be implemented. The Swiss franc is not a currency experiencing a high rate of inflation, and therefore the difference compared to a "zero real growth" budget should be made up by efficiencies in management of programs and finances. However, with respect to the timing of the budget's yearly contributions, in view of the difficulties that some Members (including Italy) face in fulfilling their obligations on time, we are not opposing an increase in the level of the working capital fund.

GOVERNANCE

¶6. Italy is among the proposers of the resolution to allow Members to be present as observers during Executive Council sessions. It looks strange that other organizations (NGOs, agencies, etc.) are admitted to the working of the Executive Council while Members are not. We believe that, provided that no additional funds will be required, the larger participation will be beneficial to the WMO. In addition, we believe that FINAC (the Financial Council?) has the definitive role in discussions of how major contributors feel regarding the sustainability of programs and the budget, and more recently, the Audit Committee has taken on the important role of monitoring the efficiency and correctness of the Organization's financial management. Both are essential for us, but their terms of reference should be properly coordinated.

END TEXT.

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